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BASCOM'S ARISTOCRACY

By JASPER COLINGWOOD

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When Herbert Bascom's effects were moved into the Holbein studios the other occupants gathered in the front windows and jeered openly. Bascom, whose hearing was singularly acute, caught the comments as far up as the third floor. What those on the fourth floor thought was scarcely of importance. The singular unanimity of opinion among the dwellers of the three lower floors argued that those up above would scarcely be moved to comment approvingly in defiance of their fellows.

The only trouble with Bascom's effects was that they were new—distressingly new. From the oilcloth for the tiny kitchen to the Persian rugs and Turkish hangings they all came from first hand stores. The Holbeins were unaccustomed to such extravagant things when they had first set up and thereby had acquired merit in the eyes of those already established. It was unholbeinian, as Tolliver expressed it, to have glaring new furniture and things in one's studio. It argued the possession of unseemly quantities of money and small artistic merit. From the moment that the first delivery wagon backed up to the door Bascom lost his surname, so far as his fellows were concerned, and gained the title of the Aristocrat. It was Tolliver's nickname, but it spread rapidly, and no French communist ever hated the name more than the Holbeins.

As soon as the place had been settled Bascom went around one morning delivering invitations for a studio tea that afternoon. There were many moved to accept the invitation, for the delivery wagon of a leading grocery had unloaded much that looked attractive that morning.

But Tolliver made a personal canvass, and when Bascom hurried home that afternoon, laden with additional packages, he was met by a neat pile of regrets carefully planned upon his door. As a result of Tolliver's activity it had been decided to snub this aristocrat who sought by means of the tea to flaunt his rich possessions before their eyes. It was unholbeinian, and, while his presence had to be tolerated, friendship and fellowship should be withheld.

Bascom was no fool. He readily perceived why he was being snubbed and quietly accepted the situation. He nodded friendly to the men when he met them in the halls and gravely removed his hat when he passed the women. For the rest he went to work and found in this an absorption which did not permit him to worry about the attitude of his neighbors. He missed their companionship, but he had letters in plenty. Since the artistic colony refused to recognize him he devoted himself to his society engagements when time permitted, thereby bringing forth additional comment as to the gorgeousness of his garments.

Then came Miss Alice Caswell. She was but a decorator of china, but her effects were pitifully meager, and she was at once accepted by the rest of the inhabitants as a bohemian. She was a bright, brisk, even tempered girl, and before the week was out she had made friends even with the jaded, a feat hitherto supposed to be impossible. She had the studio across the hall from Bascom, and before she had learned of his isolation had already formed a friendship with him. She had needed some material which she did not have time to get out for, and he had generously supplied her wants. She had noted with approving eye his skill as a draftsman and fine sense of color. After that she soon acquired the habit of dropping in to ask his advice about her designs, finding his wide experience of great value.

By the time the other dwellers in the studio building had thought to warn her of the intruder in their colony the intruder had become her mentor, and she grieved greatly as one after another the rest of the artists let slip some caustic fling.

"But he is a really clever man," she assured Tolliver one day as he sat perched in the window seat declaiming against the Aristocrat. "I assure you that his paintings are very much above the average."

Tolliver snorted contemptuously. "My dear child," he remarked paternally, "you do some very clever china work. Don't try to get beyond it and set up as a critic. There never was a man who settled here with new furniture. He can't be an artist." Then the conversation dropped. There was no arguing with Tolliver when he called one "dear child."

A few weeks later she had a birthday party. Early in the morning the occupants of the other studios began to arrive, each with some little token and the invariable inquiry as to whether Bascom had been invited to the evening festivities. It seemed odd to her that they should be so interested in his possible appearance, but she readily answered that he would. No objection being offered, she personally rounded up Bascom when the time of the party arrived and got him across the hall on the plea that she needed help in the preparation of the supper.

Bascom had interposed many objections when she had invited him, but she had pleaded with him, and on her assurance that the attitude of the others had materially changed he decided to risk it because she wanted it. She never realized that the abate-

ment of the criticism was because she was openly his champion and the rest had decided to respect her "delusion," as they termed it. She was so happy getting the spread ready that she never noticed the clock until all of the preparations had been made.

"Why, it's 9?" she said wonderingly. "I asked them to come in about 8. I'll take a little run down the hall and remind some of them."

Bascom sank into the easy chair in front of the canal coal fire. Canal coal was a luxury in the Holbein flats, but he had sent two scuttles that morning in honor of the event. Alice ran down the hall to Tolliver's door. There pinned to a panel was the sign: "Gone to the theater." She retraced her steps to the stairway. On every door was some card giving notice that the owner had gone out. She descended to the lower floors. Apparently not a soul remained in the building. Bascom by the fireplace was startled by the tiny figure that darted in and sank sobbing upon the homemade cushion.

It took small questioning to get at the trouble. The cause he already knew. The form the opposition had taken was all he needed to ask. "I wouldn't have minded so much," she sobbed, "only I did so want them to meet you and see how nice you really were."

"Did you get it all up for me," he demanded eagerly.

She nodded. "That isn't the worst of it," she confessed. "I even invented the birthday. Mine was seven months away and I couldn't wait. I thought they would be more apt to come to a birthday party. Now I have all their presents and they wouldn't come."

"He threw the fearful little face down upon his shoulder. 'Little girl,' he said gently, 'don't you think they would be more apt to come to a wedding?'"

"I couldn't invent that," she protested in a muffled voice. "It's very easy," he persisted. "Just say 'yes.' I will look after the rest. I have wanted to ask you for a long time."

An Armenian Legend.

Ararat, one of the most majestic mountains in the world, rises 17,000 feet above the vast flat plain which bears its name and reigns over the surrounding mountains. Early in the morning, while all the valleys of Ararat and the neighboring mountains are buried in shadow, the white top of the Scriptural mountain gleams beautiful in the first beams of the sun. The Armenian people tell this story about the inhabitants of Pharbee: Once the devil and a Pharbee man laid a wager as to which should first see the sun. The one who saw it first was to box the other's ears. "Very well," said the Armenian, and he lay down and slept sweetly, while the devil, itching to punish his enemy, stood looking eastward, and with eager eyes watched the whole night for the sunrise. Early in the morning the Pharbee man rose and pointing to the top of the Ararat, which was already shining in the sun, cried joyfully, "I see it!" The devil was vanquished. The Pharbee man, with his strong hand, boxed the devil's ears. Ever since that time the devil has been afraid of the people of the Armenian village of Pharbee.

Her Reward.

"The brute!" exclaimed the bride of a year. "Have a cup of tea, dear," said her fondest friend, "and tell me all about it. What has he been doing now?" "You know I told you he has been encouraging me in my learning to cook, has praised my nice little entrees, takes me to the theater as an occasional reward and all that."

"No good ground for a separation in that," I imagine," said the dearest friend, with slight sarcasm. "Your sympathy is worse than your tea," retorted the bride, who was obviously out of sorts. "But I'm going to tell you anyway. Not long ago I promised me a surprise if I would turn out a nice dinner cooked all by myself, from soup to coffee. Last night I did so. Everything pleased him."

"My pet," he remarked, "I believe I promised you a surprise on an occasion like this."

"Yes, darling," I answered. "Oh, do tell me what it is?" "I shall discharge the cook at the end of the month," he said.—New York Press.

Right Hand and Left.

"There are few people who are not, in one respect or another, left handed, if only in the management of a coffee cup," said a writer. "I, for instance, always deal cards with my left hand, though I am left handed in no other discoverable manner. There is a well known artist in Philadelphia, too, who draws with his left hand, but who writes with his right."

"If the crucial test of supremacy is demanded and right and left hands come to the final court of appeal it will be found in the wedding of so simple a thing as a pair of scissors. The fellow who is really right handed can and may do many things with his left. He may instinctively use his left hand for his glass and ply his fork from the same side. But he cannot succeed in cutting the nails of the fingers of his right hand with scissors. There is something in a little pair of nail scissors which tries the human hand to its utmost capacity."—Philadelphia Press.

FOR YOUNG FOLKS

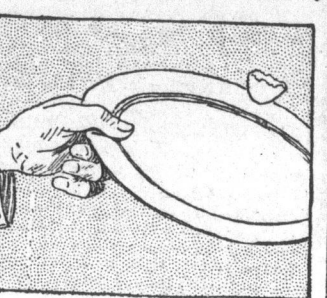
A LESSON IN ASTRONOMY.

You Can Study It and Perform a Trick at the Same Time.

With an eggshell and a breakfast plate our boys and girls can perform a little trick that will interest and instruct at the same time.

The next time you eat a boiled egg moisten the rim—not merely the edge, but all the raised part—of your plate and place the empty eggshell on the wet surface.

The shell should be broken off evenly all around so as to form a little cup. Now, if you hold the plate up and tip it slightly, the egg will not merely



HOW TO SPIN THE EGGSHELL.

slide but spin along the rim, and by continually altering the inclination angle of the plate you can make the shell spin all the way around it. I do not mean that it will spin rapidly like a top, but that as it goes around the plate it also revolves slowly about its own axis in the same direction.

Now this, you know, is just what the earth does in traveling around the sun, so here you have an easy and pretty lesson in astronomy at the breakfast table.

It is not exactly nice to muss with one's food, but in this case it may be allowable to make a dab of egg yolk in the center of the plate, with rays streaming out all around to represent the sun.—New York Mail.

THE HORSESHOE.

How a Peasant Taught His Little Boy a Good Lesson.

A peasant was going on a journey with his son Thomas. "Look," said the father, on the way, "there is a horseshoe lying in the road; pick it up and put it in your pocket."

"Oh!" said Thomas. "It is not worth the trouble of stooping down."

The father picked up the iron without saying anything more and put it into his pocket. In the next village he sold it to the smith for a few farthings and bought some cherries with the money. They both traveled on. The sun was shining very fiercely; far and wide there was no house, no tree, no spring to be seen, and Thomas was almost fainting with thirst.

His father now let drop—as if by accident—a cherry. Thomas picked it up as eagerly as if it were gold and put it directly into his mouth. After awhile his father let another cherry fall, and Thomas stooped down as eagerly for that. In this way from time to time his father let him pick up all the cherries, and when Thomas had devoured the last, he turned round to him laughing and said, "See, now, if you had been willing to stoop down only once for the horseshoe, you need not have stooped down so many times for the cherries."—From German of C. von Schmid.

A Robin's Queer Home.

Although any member of the bird tribe is apt to do this, the robin is the most frequent violator of the laws of bird propriety. A robin if it followed the laws laid down for it by nature would build in some shallow hole or depression in a grassy knoll. Some are content to do this, others are not.

For example, one robin chose an old tin kettle that was lying on one side under a hedge. This was in full view of the passer by and in constant danger from marauding cats and dogs. But it was waterproof and extremely convenient, so the robin chose it in saucy defiance of inquisitive visitors. Another robin chose a still stranger nesting place, and where do you suppose? In church!

The Smallest Church.

Until very recently the little church in the village of St. Lawrence, on the Isle of Wight, was the smallest church in existence. It was built nearly 900 years ago and was probably at first only used as the private chapel of some wealthy family. It was twenty-five feet long, seven feet high and eleven feet broad. It held only twelve people. Not long ago it was slightly enlarged and is no longer the very smallest church, although it is still quite small.

Reminding the Hen.

"It's well I ran into the garden," said Eddie, his face all aglow. "For what do you think, mamma, happened?" "You never will guess it, I know. The little brown hen was there clucking. 'Cut-cut!' she'd say, quick as a wink. And she looked round at me very thankful. And then she would stop short and think."

"And then she would say it all over—she did look so mad and so vexed. For, mamma, do you know, she'd forgotten the word that she ought to cluck next. So I said, 'Ca-daw-cut, ca-daw-cut!' As loud and as strong as I could. And she looked round at me very thankful. I tell you, it made her feel good."

"Then she flapped and said 'Cut-cut-ca-daw-cut!' She remembered just how it went then. But it's well I ran into the garden—she might never have clucked right again!" —Baby World.

SELECTIONS

THE MILK SICK WEED.

Mysterious and Deadly Plant That Grows in Tennessee.

From time to time in the past five decades Tennesseans have been stirred to a profound sense of interest in the state's mysterious malady, "milk sickness," as its deadly reappearance in certain sections of the state has been followed by fatal results to human beings and to stock. No one has ever discovered the cause of the malady from which death relieves the victim after such physical agony as almost deprives the human species of the power of speech, and dumb brutes express their sufferings by frenzied search for water to cool the thirst which consumes them. Once by a stream they plunge or fall into it and quickly drink themselves to death.

The fatal sickness is known to a limited extent in several sections of the state, but exists principally near Sparta, in White county. It is contracted through drinking the milk of the cows that have eaten a certain weed known as the "milk sick weed," which looks somewhat like clover and grows thickly on the infested land. But what constitutes the poison in the weed is no more determined today than it was when first located by the keen witted, nature wise mountaineers, who have been its chief victims. It has been ascribed at various times to minerals whose poison is absorbed in the roots of the "milk sick" plant, to a vapor from some fungous growth and to the action of the dew producing, in connection with the life of the plant, a certain poisonous acid. But all of these theories have failed under tests applied by practical science. On the largest infested section known to exist in the limits of the state, "Milk Sick mountain," in White county, no mineral whatever exists. Cattle which ate the "milk sick weed" after the dew had dried died in agony just as those who ate it when the dew was fresh and sparkling, and the strictest search failed to find any fungous growth whatever.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Mississippi Pearls.

The story of the fresh water pearl fishing in the Mississippi and its tributaries sounds like a tale from "The Arabian Nights." Since 1900 more than \$3,000,000 worth of pearls have been taken. It is said, from the waters of the Mississippi valley, chiefly in the southern section. A boy found a button shaped pearl near Muscatine, Ia. It weighed 168 grains and was a beauty, and he sold it to a dealer in gems for \$2,168. The dealer sold it in New York later for \$10,000. One sky blue pearl from Caney Fork, Tenn., brought \$3,800 in London. A pearl from the Black river, Arkansas, which a man who was fishing for bait found accidentally, brought \$2,000. And so on. Shellfish abound in the inland lakes of the Adirondacks, and it is said that the quest for pearls is to be begun there. Experts expect the search will be rewarded by a large and valuable find.

The Niagara Falls Tunnel.

The scenic tunnel under the Horseshoe falls of Niagara, which has just been completed, was undertaken for the Niagara Falls Queen Victoria park commission in order to provide a perfectly safe view of the cataract from below. A shaft was sunk 127 feet, and from this a tunnel was constructed, curving out under the Horseshoe falls 800 feet. From this lateral were run into the gorge, where large observation rooms will be constructed of glass where tourists can sit in easy chairs and look out. A large electric elevator has been put into the shaft, and from the bottom a large board walk has been constructed to the mouths of the various tunnels.

Increase of Population.

Few persons have any idea of the extraordinary manner in which the population of Europe has increased during the last century. According to statisticians, this population, assuming it to have been 1,000 in 1800, had increased by the year 1900 to 2,148. In other words, it had more than doubled itself within a hundred years. To this increase the Latin nations of the west and southwest contributed the least, and the greatest growth was in the east, where the people have not yet become thoroughly saturated with the ideas of modern civilization.—New York Herald.

Elephant Sausage.

In those lands where horses are the food of men all manner of flesh goes the way of the sausage machine. Recently there had to be slaughtered at Ghent an elephant well known in Belgium by the name of Jack, the last inhabitant of the zoological garden, and his flesh, which is stated to have weighed 3,800 pounds, or nearly two tons, all went to the sausage makers. In addition there were 1,100 pounds of bone; head, 250 pounds; heart, 50 pounds; liver, 100 pounds; tongue, 30 pounds; skin, 1,000 pounds, and viscera, 600 pounds.

Poison Ivy.

There are so many cases of poisoning from Rhus toxicodendron, or poison ivy, every year that the caution to beware of it can hardly be repeated too often. Remember this: Poison ivy has three leaflets and berries of a dirty white color. Virginia creeper, which so much resembles poison ivy in habit of growth and general appearance, has five leaflets and purple berries. Just to bear in mind this simple distinction makes all the difference between safety and suffering.

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